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W.A. SINCLAIR

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THE VOICE OF THE NAZI

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The Voice of the Nazi

Being Eight Broadcast Talks

given between December 1939 and May 1940

by

W. A. SINCLAIR

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PREFACE

This book is a reprint of eight broadcast talks on Nazi propaganda, given at various dates from December, 1939, to May, 1940. One or two footnotes have been added, to explain some contemporary references which might not be clear to the reader, but otherwise the talks are printed as they were given.

Such authority as they may carry has been provided by the actions of the Nazis themselves.

W. A. S.

20th May, 1940.

I

LISTENING TO HERR HITLER

Broadcast on December 12th, 1939

We have all wondered, from time to time during the last few years, what Herr Hitler's speeches really mean. Fortunately it is not very difficult to find this out. The best way to do it—in fact, the only way to do it—is to understand the reason why he makes speeches at all; that is, to understand his conception of the part played by speech-making in politics. As a matter of fact, his conception is altogether different from ours, but it is clear, and easy to understand.

Everybody realises, by this time, that Herr Hitler commonly makes statements which are not true, and gives promises which he has no intention of keeping. This, in itself, is hardly surprising; but what really is surprising, is that he is not in the least disturbed or embarrassed when it is publicly shown, by later events, that his statements were false, and that his promises were bogus.

We can all think of cases in our own land of a politician's saying something which was not strictly true, or airily promising something which he could not fulfil, but in any such instance the politician in question has at least had the grace to look uncomfortable when he was caught out. A politician like Herr Hitler is for us a new experience, and requires explanation.

Some people think that he is an unstable and excited agitator, and that he works himself up into believing for the moment what he asserts and promises. Others have psychological theories of their own, with complexes and repressions and what not; and many

dismiss the matter by saying that the man is a bad character, and that's all there is about it.

Well, maybe. No doubt there is something to be said for every one of those views. But there is more in it than that. The real explanation is actually quite simple, and we can learn it from Herr Hitler himself, from his own book, from *Mein Kampf*, for it is all given there quite plainly, especially in Chapter 6 of Volume I, and Chapter 11 of Volume II, where he discusses propaganda.

Herr Hitler's purpose, when he makes a statement in a public speech, is completely different from the purpose that people like ourselves have, when we make a statement. When you or I make a statement, we do so in order to tell somebody something ; and for us the most important thing about it, is whether it is true or not. But Herr Hitler's purpose—his conscious and deliberate purpose—is not to *tell* people anything, but to make them *do* something. And if he succeeds in making them do what he wants, then he is satisfied, and he is not interested in whether the statements he employs are true or not. He is just not interested.

Here is an example of the same sort of thing on a small scale. Imagine a man who wants to rob the till of a little shop. He goes in and tells some yarn to the girl behind the counter, with the object of getting her out of the way. He says, "The grocer next door has a message for you, and wants to see you. I'll wait till you come back."

If this story causes the girl to leave the shop, then the man is satisfied with it. It has done the job for which he invented it. Whether it is true or false in actual fact, does not interest him.

In precisely the same way, Herr Hitler is not concerned with the truth of the statements he makes, nor with the sincerity of the assurances he gives. He is interested in nothing but their immediate effectiveness

in furthering the ends he has in view. And he says anything at all that seems to him likely, at that time, to have the effect he wants. (That is why he says so many things which he flatly contradicts later on, when conditions have changed and he therefore wants to produce a different effect.)

For instance, in January of this year,[1] Herr Hitler wanted to make the Poles think that he had no aggressive intentions towards them; so that Poland would make no special defensive preparations, and would in consequence be unable to stop him when he was ready to invade and destroy her. Therefore, he made speeches designed to arouse confidence in Poland, and in other countries, including ourselves. He made promises, and gave assurances, simply because they seemed to him likely to produce the effect he wanted, namely an international quiet period, in which he could complete his preparations.

Here is a passage from one of those speeches. In the Reichstag on January 30th, he spoke of the Non-Aggression Pact between Germany and Poland, and he said this:

"*There can scarcely be any difference of opinion to-day among the true friends of peace with regard to the value of this agreement.*"

And then he went on:

"*In signing it, this great Polish marshal and patriot [Pilsudski] rendered his people just as great a service as the leaders of the National Socialist State rendered the German people. During the troubled months of the past year, the friendship between Germany and Poland was one of the reassuring factors in the political life of Europe.*"

That is the translation of what he said, and here now is a recording of his voice, actually saying it.

[1] *i.e.*, January of 1939.

(*At this point a gramophone record of Herr Hitler's voice was played.*)

He spoke those words quietly—or fairly quietly—sincerely, confidentially, in the manner of the plain, honest man putting his cards on the table. And yet, that was only seven months before his invasion and devastation of Poland.

But that is not his only manner. He varies his technique. He often speaks with what sounds like vehement and passionate sincerity. For example, in September of last year,[1] he wanted to make it appear that the peace of Europe was safe for years to come, if only the Sudeten German question were settled. Therefore, he gave the assurance that we all remember so well. On September 26th he said :

" *I have further assured him* [*Mr. Chamberlain*] *that when this problem* [*the Sudeten Germans*] *is settled, there is no territorial problem left for Germany in Europe. . . . Then the Czech state doesn't interest me any more. I* guarantee *him that. We don't want any Czechs.*"

Listen to him giving that guarantee.

(*A gramophone recording was played here. Herr Hitler's voice rose in vehemence and shrillness, and was finally lost in a storm of " Heils " from the crowd.*)

That is a good example of Herr Hitler being emphatic. He is an extremely skilful orator. I think that most of us, if we had heard that said for the first time, and did not know anything about the speaker, would have thought that he really meant it.

Well, that is Herr Hitler's regular procedure, and that is why he is neither disturbed nor embarrassed when he is reproached for false statements and broken

[1] *i.e.*, September of 1938, the time of the Munich agreement.

promises. He regards such reproaches merely as the incidental accompaniments of adroitness and success; he regards them merely as showing how successful he has been in deceiving his hearers and gaining his own ends.

This practice of making statements without any reference to the truth, and of giving promises without any intention of keeping them, but only to produce a desired result, would obviously be unworkable in the daily life of a private person; for any ordinary citizen who attempted to run his life on such lines would speedily be found out, and come to grief.

Why then, should Herr Hitler think he could succeed by those methods in public life? The answer to this also is in *Mein Kampf*, where he repeatedly urges his followers to employ those very methods, and to rely on the success of them, because of the very low opinion he holds of his fellow-men. He thinks that all mankind, with only a few exceptions, are very stupid and very poor-spirited. His own words are:

"*Only a fraction [of men] are energetic and strong-minded,*" "*the majority are lazy and timid*"; and he speaks of "*the mass of our nation, that great stupid flock of easily driven sheep,*" who "*believe and obey because they are too stupid to understand.*"

These are exact translations from *Mein Kampf*. They are worth repeating:

"*. . . The mass of our nation, that great stupid flock of easily driven sheep,*" who "*believe and obey because they are too stupid to understand.*"

That is the German Chancellor's opinion of the people whose leader he has become. I think you can see that any body in this or any other country who is inclined

to believe Herr Hitler, or even to think there may be something in what he says, is simply showing himself to be one more of these "easily driven sheep."

After those passages I have quoted, Herr Hitler goes on to say that the energetic and strong-minded part of the population is so small that it can be easily crushed, and that all the rest, all the ordinary men and women who read the newspapers and listen to the wireless, can be made to believe, and consequently to do, almost anything their rulers wish, if only the men in power know how to handle propaganda boldly and recklessly enough.

That is the estimate of human nature on which are based not only Herr Hitler's personal methods of public speaking, but also the whole Nazi propaganda organisation under Dr. Goebbels.

On Herr Hitler's political principles, expressly avowed and urged upon his followers, the spokesmen of the German Government have no concern with truth or sincerity. For Herr Hitler, international statecraft is the cult of the totally bogus.

So when once we understand his conception of the part played by speech-making in politics, it turns out to be simple, consistent, deliberate, and in its own regardless way, quite straightforward. There is nothing mysterious or mystical about it at all.

From this, we can draw two practical conclusions. The first is, that it is a waste of time to puzzle ourselves whether any assertion of Herr Hitler's is really true, or whether any assurance of his is really sincere. We have no ground for believing a word he says, but on the other hand we have no ground for believing the opposite. A statement might be true, even though Herr Hitler made it; and a promise might be kept, even though it is one of Herr Hitler's promises. From his speeches, taken by themselves, we can tell nothing, absolutely nothing, one way or the other, about what

he asserts and what he promises. As far as information on these points is concerned, the speeches might as well never have been made. That is the first conclusion. It does not tell us much, but at least it prevents us from being misled.

The second conclusion, however, does tell us something more. It is that information on three other points can be extracted from Herr Hitler's speeches, provided we bear in mind the reason why he makes them.

First: we can detect what he is hoping to manœuvre us (and the neutrals) into doing. A very simple recent example of this was the speech in which he made his so-called "peace proposals," shortly after completing the seizure of Poland. And in the last few days it has begun to look as if he would make another similar speech fairly soon. In it he would say anything, and promise anything, with the apparent object of persuading the Allied Governments to accept the present situation, and call off the war. But he knows that that is impossible, and his real object would be to delude well-meaning but simple souls in this country, and make them do his work for him by raising an agitation for peace at once. That is the first sort of thing we can look out for in his speeches.

The second is this: we can detect what he is finding it necessary to make his own people believe; and this gives us fairly reliable information about the internal condition of Germany. For instance, his periodic assertions that some atrocious crime has been engineered by Britain have always indicated that, at that time, German morale was flagging, and was in need of being whipped up afresh by arousing new fear and hatred of Britain.

And lastly: we can often anticipate, with fair confidence, what move of his own he is leading up to. For instance, when he began to say that the Poles were

violating the Constitution of the Free City of Danzig, his assertions gave us no reliable information whatever about the alleged incidents, but they gave grounds for the very sound suspicion that he was preparing to destroy that Constitution himself.

So, for those who know how to listen, there is a good deal to be learned from Herr Hitler's speeches, though it is hardly what he would like us to learn from them.

I do not think we need discuss the morality of this conception of the art of government. As to the final outcome of it, we all, I think, share the same conviction. Herr Hitler's system will in the end destroy itself: and that will happen just as soon as enough people understand it and cease to be taken in by it. In other words, in politics as in private life, honesty is the best policy, in the long run; but only, I am afraid, in the very long run. Still, we can take heart. We are much nearer now to the end of that long run, than we were six months ago.

II

HOW DR. GOEBBELS DOES IT

Broadcast on December 26th, 1939

THE Nazis have invented a new way of using propaganda, and for that reason one of the three most important men in Germany—Dr. Goebbels—is their Minister of Propaganda.

There is, of course, nothing new about propaganda itself; it is as old as politics. From the earliest times propaganda in some form or other has been used as a sort of running commentary on political actions, explaining them and justifying them. What usually happened was that first of all the statesmen decided what to do, and did it; then the propagandists began to explain what was being done, and why it was being done. Of course, this led them very often to take liberties with the truth, and there are discreditable episodes of that kind in the past of every country, including our own. But on the whole, propagandists were in the position of barristers in a law court: each tried to make out the best case he could for his side, while keeping more or less to the facts.

The Nazis, on the other hand, send out their propaganda in such enormous bulk that they are able to use it in a new way, not just as commentary on political action, but as itself a political action of a most effective kind. What happens is that, first of all, the Nazi statesmen decide what they want done; then they think out what people will have to be made to believe, in order to make them do what is wanted.

At this stage the matter is handed over to Dr. Goebbels. He and his Propaganda Ministry take

charge: they cast about for statements likely to create those beliefs, and when they have found, or invented, the necessary statements, they publish them everywhere. They are usually careful to insert in those statements just enough of the truth to entice people to believe the rest of what they say; but, apart from that, the truth doesn't enter into their calculations at all. They regard their propaganda as good propaganda if it produces the effect they want, and as bad propaganda if it doesn't.

This is a deliberate and well-organised plan of action. Propaganda used in this way is regarded by the Nazis simply as the cheapest and safest of the weapons they can employ. It *is* a weapon; it is a weapon of war just as much as a torpedo or a bomb, and it is being used for the same purpose as torpedoes and bombs—namely, to bring about the two main aims of Hitlerism.

These two main aims are, first, to make the Nazi party the master of Germany; second, to make Germany the master of Europe. These aims are vigorously stated in Nazi writings, and further, it is expressly advocated that in this struggle to conquer no regard is to be paid to truthfulness or humanity or to any other of the generally recognised virtues.

This is all so outrageous that most of us find difficulty in believing that anything of the sort could be seriously aimed at in this way by sane men at the present day. But it is. It is all laid down as a practical political programme, partly in *Mein Kampf*, but mainly—and much more extremely than I have stated it—in the innumerable books on Hitlerism written by Nazis for discussion among themselves. Unfortunately, very few of these books have been translated, and they are hardly known in this country. If they were, there would be less complaint that the destruction of Hitlerism is too vague a statement of our war aims.

If people only realised what Hitlerism really is, they would think the destruction of it a sufficiently comprehensive undertaking.

I must admit that I did not realise all that Hitlerism involves, until I came to know something of those other Nazi writings. But that's what Hitlerism is; and it's high time this was realised by all of us. Six years ago the Nazis succeeded in achieving their first aim—the domination of Germany. As to the second —the domination of Europe—they have already succeeded in Austria and in Czecho-Slovakia and in Poland, and they are going to continue step by step with the rest of Europe unless they are stopped—and stopped by force. No feelings of humanity will ever hold them back.

On December 19th, the *New York Times* reported a speech by the Nazi Labour Minister, Dr. Ley, in which he said:

"*Just as Poland was annihilated, so also will Britain be annihilated. We (Germans) are going to forget that great handicap—our good nature—and we will be hard and relentless in fighting for our demands.*"

That is what the French and ourselves are up against. That is the struggle in which the Nazis are using propaganda as a weapon.

We may well wonder what sort of men those Nazi leaders are. I have read through a great deal of Nazi philosophising, and have thought over it as sympathetically as I could, and I have been forced to the conclusion that the Nazi leaders really are what Mr. Churchill called them, when he referred to them, with admirable restraint, as "that band of wicked men." But thinking of their characters and motives would only arouse our anger, and I am trying to avoid that, and instead to discuss Nazi aims and methods as calmly and scientifically as possible.

The actual methods used by Dr. Goebbels—the tricks of his trade—are well worth examining. Here I can deal with only one. But it is an interesting one, and several people have written asking about it. It is this: How is it that Nazi propaganda has been so successful inside Germany? How is it that Dr. Goebbels has succeeded in making ordinary decent Germans believe so many things that are not merely untrue, but quite ridiculous? How, for instance, has he succeeded in making ordinary decent Germans believe that the British are so cruel and bloodthirsty, that Englishmen out East who want to hunt crocodiles are in the habit of tying up little native boys beside a river and using them as bait? That story has been repeated again and again, and the German newspapers are full of things just as absurd. On May 1st,[1] the *12 Uhr Blatt* said that the New Guinea cannibals were being called up to join the British Army. Then it added "*Attempts are being made to calm the terrified inhabitants of London by the assurance that, in the first instance, cannibals will be employed only to construct fortifications.*"

Well, no doubt the Germans are by nature a very gullible race, but that by itself will not account for Dr. Goebbels's proceedings. There must be something more. There is. The clearest way to understand it, is to think for a moment of any interesting novel you have read, and ask yourself why it sounded real. Think of, say, *The Prisoner of Zenda*, which was broadcast some months ago. It sounded convincing, didn't it? Well, if the Princess Flavia had been described in one chapter as "tall and slim", and in the next as "plump and chubby," or if there had been any other serious inconsistencies, then you would not have had the feeling that it all really happened. In that particular novel there aren't any such inconsistencies, and the whole thing seems real—and yet, the whole thing never happened. There never was a country

[1] of 1939.

called "Ruritania," and there never was a Black Michael, or a Princess Flavia. The novel is just a long succession of statements which are not true; but (and this is the point) all those statements are strictly consistent with one another. The consequence is that the reader or listener has the feeling that it all really happened.

This is the first half of the explanation. This is why Dr. Goebbels can make the German newspaper reader and the German radio listener have the feeling that "it all really happened." He has complete centralised control over the German Press and the German wireless, and he arranges (or at least, he tries to arrange) that they all tell the same story, and that all the parts of the story are consistent with one another.

At this point, I expect you are thinking that this explanation is all very well, but it isn't enough; after all, novel readers don't really believe what they read in library books, while the Germans do really believe what they read in their newspapers.

I hope that is what you are thinking, for it leads to the second part of the explanation. Why don't the novel readers believe that Ruritania is real? Because they have other information from independent sources, such as school geography, history, and so forth, which tells them that there is no such country, and never has been. If they did not have that information from independent sources, they might make the mistake of thinking that the novel was a genuine history. Children often do that with novels, and sometimes older people do also.

Now, the ordinary German has not got any information from independent sources to contrast with what Dr. Goebbels tells him. The Secret Police and their domestic spies see to that; and as far as they can, they prevent him from reading foreign newspapers and from listening to foreign broadcasts. That is the

system under which the Germans are living, so it is not surprising that the vast majority of them—up to the present at least—do believe what they are told.

To keep this system going, the German propagandists have to watch two things. First, they must be sufficiently consistent to be believable. In this they frequently fail : for instance, they ran a great deal of naval propaganda during the first half of this month, and, as we have all observed, they bungled it very badly. In the end the facts were too much for them.

On December 12th, it was claimed that the British Navy had been forced by Germany to take the defensive.

On December 13th, it was similarly claimed that the return of the *Bremen* was due to German command of the seas, and that this command of the seas was due to the bold offensive spirit of the German Navy.

On December 15th it was similarly claimed that the *Graf Spee* had won a famous victory.

Then, on the following days the Nazi announcements became hopelessly contradictory. First of all the German wireless said that the *Graf Spee* had soundly beaten three British cruisers, that she was undamaged, and had gone into Montevideo only because her food supply had been tainted by our alleged mustard-gas shells. Not long after, as you know, they had to admit that the ship was unseaworthy, and they then protested that she could not be repaired in the time allowed her by the Uruguayan Government.

But the facts are common knowledge now, and the Nazis have had to admit that the *Graf Spee* has been scuttled and that her commander has committed suicide. This must have done more than any other single incident since the war began to arouse mistrust of the Nazi news in the ordinary German's mind.

The other thing the Nazi Government must watch is

that no independent information gets in from outside. They are, very naturally, scared of the effect of their people's listening to news from outside Germany and comparing it with the Nazi versions, and they punish such listening very severely. I expect you noticed in the papers last week that some unfortunate people in Berlin had been caught listening to a foreign broadcast and had been sent to prison for four years.

The difference between that German system and our way in this country, is profound. We can listen to anything we like, and are expected to use our own judgment. It's a difference worth thinking over.

III

ALL THINGS TO ALL MEN

Broadcast on January 23rd, 1940

MANY people are asking what ought to be done about enemy propaganda in this country.

Our Government could, of course, descend to the Nazi level, and deal with the matter by always saying the opposite of what the enemy says, and saying it all day long and very much louder; or even by prohibiting listening to foreign broadcasts altogether. That is what is done in Germany; but in our country—characteristically—the responsibility for dealing with the matter is left to us.

This means that two things are required from each one of us. The first of these is common sense. As to that, every man must provide his own. Neither the Government nor anybody else can provide him with that. But common sense by itself is not enough. Something more is required. It is not yet as widespread as common sense, but every man can get it, if he takes the trouble. This second thing is an understanding of Nazi propaganda, both of what it is, and of how it works.

This is because of an outstanding difference between propaganda on the one hand, and all the other Nazi weapons, such as bombs and shells and so forth, on the other. If you get hit by a Nazi bomb, then it makes no difference whether you understand the mechanism of the bomb or not. You have been hit, and killed or injured, and that's that. The bomb has the same effect on you, whether you understand how it works or not. But in the case of propaganda, it makes all the difference whether you understand

how it works or not. If you do understand it, and see *why* it is done, and *how* it is done, then it will have no effect on you. You will not be misled by it, and taken advantage of.

Nazi propaganda, unlike a Nazi bomb, is not dangerous in itself. It is dangerous only to those who don't know what it is, just as a card-sharper is not dangerous in himself, but is dangerous only to those who don't know that he is a card-sharper.

It helps a good deal, I find, if we can look at the Nazi propaganda system as a whole; that is, if we can watch it working over a period of years, and not just at the present moment only; and if we can watch it working all over the world and not just in one country only.

As regards its working over a period of years, we can see better what is happening if we think of a simple illustration. We all know the children's story of the boy who cried "wolf" when there wasn't any wolf. At first he made his family come running to help him. But after he had played this trick several times, nobody believed him any more. Then, when he cried for help in real earnest, nobody paid any attention, and that was the end of him. With Herr Hitler and his Government, that has happened already, as far as treaties and promises are concerned. By this time there is nobody left who would think of relying on a Nazi promise. In that regard, the children's story has come true.

But that is not all. We must not forget the first part of the story. In the beginning, the boy *was* believed. There *was* a time in which his little schemes did work. There was a time in which his lies did make people do what he wanted them to do. In the life of a boy who is a deliberate liar, the period before he is found out, and disbelieved, is quite short. In the life of a government which is a deliberate liar, the

period before it is found out and disbelieved may be very much longer. As far as their propaganda talks and so-called "News Bulletins" are concerned, the Nazi Government is only passing though that period, and has not reached the end of it yet. There are still many people in this and other countries who are being misled and taken advantage of. This is not because they are stupid, but because they do not yet understand what Nazi propaganda is.

Now let us look at the Nazi propaganda system working all over the world. When we hear Nazi propaganda mentioned, we tend to think mainly of the Nazi broadcasts in English, for they are in our language, and we are the people they are aimed at. We must, however, remember that propaganda in English is only a comparatively small part of the Nazis' total output, and not necessarily the most important part. They are sending out steady streams of propaganda of every kind, by wireless, by pamphlets, by newspapers and by films, to every country in the world, and twenty-four hours a day.

The peoples of those various countries are all different. The Nazi Propaganda Ministry, therefore, sitting in its offices in Berlin, designs different propaganda talks, and different "News Bulletins," to send out to each of the different countries it intends to work upon. For that reason, the propaganda sent out to each separate country usually sounds fairly convincing when considered by itself, because it has been specially made up to sound convincing to that particular people. If we, for instance, hear only the propaganda intended for our country, we may quite easily be taken in by it. If, however, we compare the propaganda sent to one country with the propaganda sent to other countries, then that gives the show away.

Here is an instance from one of the Nazi propaganda

talks meant for France. The purpose of these talks is to mislead the French into thinking that Germany really wants to be at peace with France, and would be so, if it were not for the wicked British. Therefore the Nazis spend a lot of time trying to explain away those very prominent passages in *Mein Kampf* in which Herr Hitler asserts his intention of attacking and utterly destroying France. Here is what was said in a Nazi broadcast in French on the 18th of last month:—

"*French listeners . . . you are told that in this book Hitler decided on the destruction of France. You are too logical not to understand that* Mein Kampf, *being a human work, has its human side, in this case an echo of the popular anti-French feeling which prevailed in 1924 . . . There are reasons for modifications of* Mein Kampf *which you can see for yourselves . . . You must see that policy towards France has changed, when you see that Hitler concluded an agreement with Russia . . . If in a few days, facing the British danger, the German State could make an alliance with Russia, you must see that no preconceived ideas exist in Hitler's mind, and that he directs German policy according to events and circumstances.*"

If you had heard that talk, and that talk only, you would probably think it was frank, honest, and fairly convincing. But it turns out to be very different, when we hear what was being said from other Nazi wireless stations at the same time. The Germans were being urged to give copies of *Mein Kampf* as Christmas presents to soldiers, and two days after that French talk, the Deutschlandsender station said this in a German talk :—

"*Not a word of this book has changed, just as Hitler has not changed. The new pocket edition makes it possible for every soldier to have the Fuehrer's words at hand at all times.*"

Here is another example—about ourselves this

time. It is interesting because it has an ingenious additional twist in it. Last month the Nazis were busily trying in every way to reduce the prestige of the British Navy, so on the 21st they sent out this " news " bulletin :—

" *The most unbelievable scenes took place during the funeral service of the thirty-six sailors of the* Graf Spee. *The crews of several British ships anchored in Montevideo spat on the coffins of German sailors as the funeral procession passed, and made cat-calls during the funeral service. This indescribable cynicism, if one calls it nothing else, reached its height when, immediately after the funeral service, the British sailors threw the body of a dead dog on the grave of the German sailors.*"

This item of " news " was sent out for Asia and the Far East at half-past nine in the morning ; in Dutch at midday ; in Spanish at two in the afternoon ; in Arabic for the Near East and Middle East at half-past four ; and in French at a quarter-past eight. The story was the same each time, except that for some countries where cats are regarded as unclean, it was a dead cat. But this story was *not* included in the Nazi broadcasts in English.

Then the speaker from the Deutschlandsender station, at a quarter to seven that same evening, flatly denied that any such story had been broadcast at all. This is where the characteristic additional twist comes in, for he went on to accuse the *British* wireless of lying. In a tone of injured innocence and righteous indignation, he said this :—

" *The British wireless goes so far as to assert that we tried to make propaganda beside the open graves of dead sailors, with allegations about dead dogs.*"

Then, as if addressing us, he went on :—

"*No, no, gentlemen, the German people are a people of soldiers. They not only act in that manner, they also speak in that manner, and we are only too glad to leave abuse of this kind to you.*"

To any one who did not know about those other German broadcasts which had been going out all that same day, this talk might have carried some weight. It might even have achieved the purpose for which it was given, which was of course to make those who heard it think that the British wireless was unreliable.

When we look at the Nazi propaganda system as a whole like this, one thing stands out very clearly. Nazi propaganda is *not* a statement of " the case for Germany " on the issues of the present war : it is *not* " an account of the war situation as seen through German eyes." It is dressed up to look like that, but really it is nothing but an attempt to conquer, by misleading people. In fact, it is just the same sort of thing as a Nazi promise.

Nazi propaganda in English is simply and solely an attempt to bring us nearer to that defeat and destruction, which Dr. Goebbels spoke of last week as being the war aim of Germany. So, in their broadcasts, the Nazis are simply trying to weaken and discourage us, by saying anything at all that they can think of, to arouse dissensions among us, to make us lose faith in our leaders, and lose confidence in ourselves.

Those broadcasts are very carefully planned for this purpose. In each of them, mingled with all the barefaced lies, there is usually some item which is more or less true ; and occasionally some quite sound criticism. These are inserted to lead us on, just as a share-pusher, or a three-card-trick man always lets his intended victims win a little to begin with, so that they may be led on, and then completely swindled.

That is why Nazi propaganda talks and Nazi news

bulletins cannot be treated as the German side of the case, and compared with the British or French talks and news. If, consciously or unconsciously, we do attempt to compare them (in the belief that we are doing the right thing by listening to both sides) then we fall straight into the trap laid for us by Dr. Goebbels.

IV

SOME TRICKS OF THE TRADE

Broadcast on February 20th, 1940

ELEVEN years ago, at a very early stage of the Nazis' career, the man who is now their Minister of Propaganda, Dr. Goebbels, gave an account of what he considered his job to be. It was, he said, "*to arouse outbursts of fury: to get masses of men on the march; to organise hatred and suspicion—all with ice-cold calculation.*" He said this in the *Angriff*, a newspaper then circulating among Nazis only, on February 18th, 1929. These words of his own serve as a brief but adequate description of his activities and also, I am afraid, of his character. To-day, this uncreative agitator is trying "with ice-cold calculation," to organise hatred and suspicion among us.

This is the real purpose behind those Hamburg broadcasts. They look as if they were intended as arguments to influence our opinions, to convince or persuade us; but they are really intended to influence our feelings, to make us uneasy, mistrustful and depressed.

To do this, the Nazi broadcasters adopt all sorts of tricks. Many of these are quite simple: they are only different ways of telling lies. But the Nazis have tricks of another kind also, which are much more subtle. These are much more difficult to detect, and may cause a lot of worry to people who do not fully understand them. The variety of these tricks is, of course, enormous; but three of them are specially noteworthy, as they are so constantly used.

The first trick is to refer repeatedly to things like

bacon and butter shortage ; black-out inconveniences and dangers ; evacuation difficulties ; the separation of families ; and all the other hardships of war-time—especially those which directly affect women, for it is women that this trick is specially aimed at.

It is usually done by quoting from our newspapers. On the 7th of this month, for instance, Hamburg quoted the *Daily Herald*, which had been saying that the British social services were going to suffer very badly because of the war. Evacuation, it went on to say, had meant that compulsory education had ceased, and with it the care for young children ; a break like this in a child's education might often be fatal, for the loss could not be made up ; in many cases children were running wild and falling into bad habits which they might retain for the rest of their lives.

That is more or less what the *Daily Herald* said, and it may or may not be true. Of course, if it *is* true, not much thought is required to see that it is the Nazis who have caused it all. There would have been no need for evacuation and all its troubles, if the Nazis had not bombed Polish children in their schools, and killed and maimed them. There would be no bacon or butter shortage if the Nazis were not torpedoing and bombing merchant ships—neutral ships as well as our own—whenever they get the chance, and scattering mines all over the North Sea. None of these things would have happened at all, if the Nazis had not set out to reduce us to the condition to which they had already reduced Poland.

This, of course, is obvious. But if you are tired and over-wrought, and have been kept busy all day by innumerable little worries, then, even though you know at the back of your mind that it is those far-away Nazis who are causing all these restrictions, you cannot help being irritated, and perhaps feeling resentful at the restrictions themselves.

This is just what the Hamburg broadcasters are try-

ing to do to us. They are not trying to argue with us—they are simply trying to depress us. Often, of course, the effect they have is quite the opposite. Many people get furiously angry at hearing such remarks made by one of the men who have forced these precautions on us by their systematic brutality elsewhere. But the Hamburg broadcasters do not mind that. It is not the angry and indignant people they are trying to work upon—it is the tired and worried people, and they are trying to make them more tired, and more worried.

The second of these constantly used tricks is to persist, in every broadcast, in blaming some one cause for every trouble of every kind. This is a deliberate propagandist dodge, and Herr Hitler describes how to do it, in *Mein Kampf*. On page 129 he says:

" *The art of being a mass leader consists in concentrating the attention of the people on one opponent.*" " *The skill of a great leader shows itself in making different opponents look as if they were all of the same kind.*"

Herr Hitler adds the remark that this must be done, because if it is not done, the people think for themselves, and that means the end of the 'great leader.'

The Nazis have long worked this trick inside Germany, and in the last few months they have been doing it in their Hamburg broadcasts also. They choose something to serve as a scapegoat, and then they try to concentrate *on it alone*, all the discontents and dissatisfactions which people may feel, although these in fact are due to all sorts of different causes.

They have changed their scapegoat from time to time to suit their convenience. For a long time it was the *Communists*; and then it was the *Jews*. Later, the two were combined, and the '*Jewish Communists*' were blamed for everything. The trick worked. The Nazis clambered into power by means of it.

Later again, last summer, they wanted to make an alliance with Russia, so they had to give up blaming Communism for everything, and had to find a new scapegoat at short notice. The one they are using now—for the time being, at least—is '*International Finance*'; or, if they think they have an anti-Jewish audience, '*Jewish International Finance.*'

This is a very convenient phrase for them. It is vague. Nobody quite knows what it means, and everybody can make it mean what he wants. This enables the Nazis to play upon a tendency which is very strong in human nature, namely, the tendency to take the easy way of thinking that there is one simple cause for all the different grievances and dissatisfactions, which all of us feel in one way or another.

They try to link this up with their repeated emphasis upon the differences—the very wide differences—between the rich and the poor. Their aim is to arouse the angry feeling that it could all be put right at once, quite simply, if those in power cared to do it. The purpose of their whole plan is to try, "with ice-cold calculation," to arouse such a feeling of anger. There is, very obviously, a great deal that is anything but satisfactory in the economic and financial system of the modern world; and it would be very much easier to put it right if there really were one single, simple cause like this, for all the trouble. Unfortunately, neither the cause nor any possible cure, is as simple as that. And the Nazis know this perfectly well.

The third, and perhaps the commonest, of their tricks is the way in which they quote complaints and criticisms from our newspapers. They try to make us feel that everything is all wrong here in this country, and that we are full of disagreements, and dissensions, and distrust of one another.

(Incidentally, their alleged quotations are hardly ever accurate. Occasionally they are pure inventions.

Most of them are distorted in one way or another to give a meaning which was never intended by the men who said them.)

It is very easy to find such complaints and criticisms to quote. You cannot pick up any British newspaper, without finding that somebody has been criticising something.

On the 9th of this month, for instance, Hamburg quoted the *Manchester Guardian*, which had been criticising the Prime Minister for not appointing a special Minister for Economic Co-ordination. On the 11th, they quoted an article from the *New Statesman*, complaining about various administrative mistakes; and another article from *The Spectator* on the unequal financial burdens which fell on different kinds of R.A.F. officers. Then, on the 12th, there was an extract from the *New Leader*, on the conditions some land girls were working under; and more about the Minister for Economic Co-ordination, from *The Times*. And so on.

Now, if criticisms and complaints like these were to be published in Germany, it *would* mean that there were internal dissensions—indeed, it would mean far more than that. It would mean that there was a revolution; for under the Nazi system, things that would cause a public outcry here, are never heard of in public at all. No one is allowed even to mention them, least of all the sufferers.

But in this country, our way of dealing with such matters is different. We grumble. Grumbling is a British habit, and in some ways a most useful one. When people here think anything is wrong, the first thing they do is to complain vigorously, either by writing to the papers, or making speeches, or just talking about it with anybody who will listen.

As a consequence of this system of public criticism, the things that get publicity here are not the things that are working efficiently, but the things that have

gone wrong or have never been right. The very fact that the Hamburg broadcasters can find quotations such as the ones I mentioned, shows two things. In the first place, it shows that we recognise that there are many things wrong in our country, just as there are in any country ; and in the second place, it shows that we are taking the first step to putting them right. In war-time, just as in peace-time, we are making shift to improve things in the one way we have found to work well in the long run, for it is only after public grumblings of this kind, that things in our country get done. It is the way our country runs.

Incidentally, the Nazis know this perfectly well. They fully understand why our papers contain criticism. This was shown in a broadcast to France on the 5th. The Nazi speaker, who was trying to make the French dissatisfied with their censorship, remarked that in Great Britain people are free to make what complaints they like in public, and to write what criticisms they like in the newspapers. That is what the Nazis say to the French ; but they do not say things like that to us.

These are the tricks most constantly employed in Nazi propaganda in English at the present moment. There once was a period at the beginning of the war when the Hamburg broadcasts were different. At that time they were meant, to some extent at least, as attempts to argue with us and persuade us. That was when the Nazis still believed that they could get what they wanted, and then persuade us to patch up a temporary peace. But about the beginning of December, when they gave up that hope, they changed their type of propaganda, and since then they have concentrated on our feelings.

For Dr. Goebbels' purpose, doing this only once would have no effect worth speaking of. It is the case that our opinions can sometimes be altered by one

short talk, if the argument is sound and if it is clearly expressed. But our feelings cannot be influenced in any such short and simple way, especially the sort of feelings which Dr. Goebbels is trying to work up.

So he has to use an additional technique as well. He uses the one laid down by Herr Hitler in *Mein Kampf*, where he says, "*Effective propaganda is repetition.*" That is why those Hamburg broadcasts repeat the same sort of things, in slightly different form, over and over again, night after night. The Nazis are hoping that the people who listen will gradually be influenced, without realising just what it is that is influencing them.

Of course, any one who has the time—and the patience—to go over a Hamburg broadcast, item by item, checking and examining each of them in turn, soon finds out what they really are. On examination the various items all turn out to be either plain lies; or attempts to work these propagandist tricks; or both. But this does not trouble the Hamburg broadcasters, for they are not attempting to produce arguments which could stand examination. As Herr Hitler says in *Mein Kampf*, on page 197 and elsewhere, "*The purpose of propaganda is not instruction.*" Its purpose is what he calls "*mass-influencing*." Those Hamburg broadcasts are intended to influence the feelings of people who have not got time to check each statement and examine each inference, and detect each trick.

It is quite clear on examination that the Nazis are making their broadcasts in English as part of a deliberate, highly-organised scheme. They are taking advantage of our freedom to listen (which they dare not allow to their own people), and they are trying to work upon our feelings—in fact, "to organise hatred and suspicion with ice-cold calculation."

V

THE MIND BEHIND THE VOICE

Broadcast on March 19th, 1940

Some years ago, about the end of 1933, a German officer was talking to a senior member of the British Embassy in Berlin. He made the rather odd remark that the British were gentlemen, but the French were not. When he was asked to explain what he meant, he related this illuminating incident. He said this : " After the war, in 1920, I was in charge of a barracks. One day some of the Military Inter-Allied Control Commission, under a French officer and a British officer, came to my barracks. They said they had reason to believe that I had a store of rifles concealed behind a brick wall, contrary to the terms of the Peace Treaty. I denied this. I said, ' I give you my word of honour as a German officer, that I have no rifles concealed in the barracks.' Well (he went on) your British officer was a gentleman. He accepted my word of honour, and he went away. But that French officer was not a gentleman. He would not accept my word of honour, and he pulled down the brick wall. And he took away my rifles."

Now, that German officer would never have dreamt of lying, and deliberately acting dishonourably in this way, to another German. The old German Army was extremely punctilious about questions of personal honour.

But he obviously did not feel obliged to tell the truth, or behave honestly, to persons who were not Germans, where anything to the advantage of Germany was concerned. The very unconsciousness of the way in which he told of the incident, shows how completely

he took it for granted that the standards of conduct he would respect in his dealings with Germans, simply did not apply at all in his dealings with other nations. In his dealings with other nations, he felt himself free to do anything that would be to the advantage of Germany, without any regard for truthfulness, or any other moral laws or obligations.

If this were only an isolated case, it would be merely comical. But, unfortunately, it is not an isolated case. It is typical. It is typical of the present German outlook; and it is because the German outlook is like this that there is war in Europe to-day.

(Fortunately for the remoter future of Europe, this is not how every German thinks. But all those who matter in present-day Germany, both leaders and people, do think like this. The only present-day Germans who don't think like this are either without influence; or in concentration camps; or in exile; or dead—murdered.)

It requires something of an effort on our part to realise just what that outlook means, and how different it is from ours. We all know that when we first make a new acquaintance, we are of course aware of any differences of opinion on small points that may crop up. But it is only after a much longer time that we come to know whether our new acquaintance has, as we say, "the same sort of outlook" as we have ourselves, and values the same sorts of things. We have all had the experience of saying to ourselves about somebody we have met, "Well, I see now that his whole outlook on life is different from mine." Most British people feel, on meeting a few Germans, as individuals, that they are very much like ourselves. But the more we get to know them, the more we find that their outlook as a nation, on those fundamental questions of what is right and honourable, is quite strange to us.

Our view is so natural to us, that we do not normally think of putting it into words. But if you or I were asked to put it into words, we should probably say something like this : Here we are, about fifty millions of us, living in this island on the edge of Europe, and across the Channel are another fifty millions of Frenchmen, and about eighty millions of Germans, and another forty millions of Italians, and so forth. And, so we think, it is the job of Foreign Secretaries and Ambassadors to arrange things so that we all get on tolerably well together, in ways that will benefit all of us. And a war—a war takes place only when those arrangements have broken down completely, either through incompetence, or more likely, through bad faith and malice on somebody's part.

We think of international relations, and international treaties, much as we think of business relations and business contracts. That is to say, an international pact or a trade agreement is a good one, a fair one, if everybody concerned gets something out of it, with something for the other fellow as well as for us. And we think that the standards of honesty and ordinary decency, which apply to ordinary business or personal relations among ourselves, should apply to our relations with other nations also. Occasionally, in the past, they have not, and we are rather ashamed at having to admit those lapses.

But the German outlook is about as different from that as can be. If a typical German were asked to put his views into words, he would probably say something like this : Here in Germany, right in the middle of Europe, are eighty millions of us Germans, surrounded by all those other millions of actual or possible enemies. The duty of the German Foreign Secretaries and Ambassadors is *not* to come to equitable arrangements with those other nations, and make fair bargains, and keep them. Their duty, as Germans, is

to do the others down, to the advantage of Germany. It is a case of Germany against all the rest, in a never-ending contest. War is merely an episode, a frequently recurring episode, in that contest. 'War,' is just a name for the frequent periods where the conflict becomes open and armed, instead of being merely diplomatic and commercial. That being so, the standards of honesty and ordinary decency, which apply to the relations of us Germans among ourselves, simply don't come into the question.

This is more or less what any typical present-day German would say. He would probably add many quotations, from *Mein Kampf* and other authorities, to explain and support his view. He might quote page 686 of *Mein Kampf*, which says "*Foreign policy is a means to an end, and the* sole *end to be pursued is the advantage of our own nation,*" and then, over the page, "*This is the one consideration that matters. All other considerations, political, religious, humanitarian, must be completely disregarded in favour of this one.*" He might also quote the briefer, and blunter, pronouncement of the Chairman of the highest Nazi Party Court, who said at Munich, on the 5th of February, 1936, "'*Right*' *is what benefits the German nation, and* '*wrong*' *is what would be hurtful to it.*" And he might add, as a sort of justification of this attitude, his opinion that the Germans are an essentially superior race, quite entitled to neglect the rights of other and inferior peoples.

This means something which most of us in this country have great difficulty in realising. It means that German breaches of faith, and German propaganda lying, and German brutalities on land and sea, are *not* occasional lapses from the normal standards of decency, regretted afterwards, as any such lapses on our part would be by us. It means the very opposite of that. It means that those outrages are the deliberate, systematic, whole-hearted application in practice of

this attitude that Germans have no moral obligations to anything other than Germany.

To us, the strangest and most alarming thing about all this—certainly the thing I found hardest to recognise as a fact—is that the ordinary German is now in such a state of mind that he is not ashamed about those outrages. He is not ashamed of his Fuehrer's notorious breaking of his word, nor of Dr. Goebbels' notorious lying, nor of Marshal Goering's bombing of unprotected ships, and machine-gunning of drowning sailors in the water, even neutral sailors. It is to the advantage of Germany that such things should be done, he thinks, and that is sufficient explanation and excuse for him.

This was almost simple-mindedly shown by Herr Hitler's speech on February 24th, both in the speech itself and in the way the crowd received it. He boasted of being that rare creature, a politician who always keeps his word. By this he means keeping his word *to Germany*. He promised to make her strong, and enlarge her frontiers, and he has done so. That is what he means by "keeping his word."

As regards keeping his word to other nations, he replied to our Prime Minister by saying, "*When Mr. Chamberlain says that he does not trust me, I thank you, Mr. Chamberlain, for not thinking I could be a traitor.*" He regards keeping his word to other nations as being a traitor to Germany. And, in consequence, he is not ashamed of breaking his word. He is proud of it. You can hear this, even in the tone of his voice as he said what I've quoted.

(*At this point a gramophone recording of Herr Hitler's words was played. He spoke with violent emphasis, and as he ended, there was a wild roar of cheering from the crowd.*)

You can also hear how whole-heartedly his audience shared his view.

In the same way their outlook justifies, in their eyes, the Nazi propaganda methods. That is what I was thinking of in an earlier talk, when I said that the question of what is true doesn't enter into the Nazi propagandists' calculations at all. (Except, of course, in so far as they must say some things that are true, in order to make people listen.) Those Nazi propagandists are not thinking of themselves as telling an occasional lie, or distorting an occasional fact, and then excusing themselves on the ground of stress of circumstance. They recognise no obligation whatever to tell the truth, or anything resembling the truth. They are not interested in the truth. They are interested only in saying anything which it would benefit Germany to make people believe; and in denying anything which it would benefit Germany to make people disbelieve. And they are not ashamed. They are proud of what is, they consider, the important part they are playing in this unending struggle of Germany against all her encircling neighbours.

In the same way again, their outlook justifies, in their eyes, their deliberate brutality in warfare, on land and sea and air. There is no need for quotations to show this, though there are plenty of them, in *Mein Kampf* and elsewhere. For instance, the *Deutsche Wehr* (which is an official periodical for Army officers) said on the 9th of September, 1936, "*In the next war, the most extreme kind of brutality will be required.*" But we need only think of what the Nazis are systematically doing in the North Sea at the present moment. Their machine-gunnings and bombings of the defenceless and the drowning are *not* occasional lapses. They are actions done on a principle, the only principle they pay any attention to, the advantage of Germany. As the Nazi judge said, "'Right' is what benefits the German nation, and 'wrong' is what would be hurtful to it."

We all want to know how it is that the Germans

have this attitude ; how far it is old, how far, if at all, it is new ; how far it is due to circumstances, and how far it is natural to the German character. These are complicated questions, and very difficult to answer. But whatever the causes of it may have been, it is their attitude now ; and with the German people in their present mood, and under their present leaders, they pay no attention to the ordinary standards of decency, honesty or humanity, or to anything other than their own prosperity at the expense of the rest of us. The only restraining influence upon them is fear, fear of the consequences of their outrages to themselves.

That is the state of mind which lies behind the voices of the Nazis, and their actions, and makes them what they are.

* * * * * *

A few days after the first broadcast of the above talk, a letter reached me from Major F. S. Lanigan-O'Keefe (whom I wish to thank for permission to reproduce part of it here), formerly of the Military Inter-Allied Commission of Control, in which he said :

" I listened with the greater interest to your talk on the wireless last night, in that I was the British officer concerned in the incident you referred to, with the result that, because in my early innocence of the German character I believed the German officer when he pledged his word as such, I earned the doubtful compliment of being described as a gentleman in German eyes.

" Fortunately my French colleague had no illusions and we learned a valuable lesson from which we profited later in similar circumstances, thereby no doubt losing our reputations as gentlemen, but with beneficial results to the work of the Commission."

VI

"BUT THERE'S SOMETHING IN WHAT THEY SAY"

Broadcast on April 16th, 1940

We all know that the Nazis send different sorts of propaganda to different countries. They follow the same plan on a small scale in the propaganda they send to any one country. The people in a country are of many different sorts. The Nazis have a whole system of different propaganda-talks, and different news-talks, at different times of the day, for people in different occupations, and for people with different interests and duties.

As you would expect, those various talks are often inconsistent and self-contradictory. There is not usually such reckless and glaring self-contradiction as we find when we compare Nazi propaganda for different countries, but the inconsistencies stand out conspicuously all the same. For instance, on the question of Munich, Hamburg usually says that Mr. Chamberlain made the Munich agreement because this country was not ready to fight in September of 1938. But on the 4th of this month, Hamburg said that Munich represented the supreme failure of Mr. Chamberlain's attempt to bring about a war in September of 1938. The reason for saying this on April 4th was that it suited the argument they happened to be using that evening.

If such inconsistencies occurred in the propaganda meant for a neutral country, they would spoil the effect, because in that case the Nazis are mainly trying to convince, and they have to be passably con-

sistent in order to get themselves believed. But they are not trying to convince *us*. They are trying to make us feel doubtful and uneasy, so a certain amount of inconsistency and self-contradiction in their English propaganda does not worry them. From their point of view, it is all to the good. It adds to the confusion they are trying to create.

Now, people belong to many different groups for different purposes. Some of these are large and some are small. But there is one very large group to which we nearly all belong, in one way or another. I do, and I expect you do too. I mean the enormously large group which consists of people who are not experts or specialists, but who take a serious and thoughtful interest in the important questions of the day.

For this group, the Nazis have a special technique, just as they have a special technique for other groups. This technique, which is obviously very carefully thought out beforehand, is the one which has the effect of making the listener think that "there's *something* in what Hamburg is saying." I don't think that many people are actually deceived by the mixture of truth with falsehood, but nearly everybody who listens is irritated and disturbed, and made to feel uneasy and even bewildered; except, of course, those few who are specialists in the subject the talk is about. They can see through the Nazi tricks. We, on the other hand, feel that there is something wrong somewhere, and yet we cannot always disentangle the truth from the falsehood. This is a serious difficulty. It is the only one in the Nazis' English propaganda that really troubles people.

A great deal of the difficulty disappears, if we recognise that this is a trick, and understand clearly the way, or ways, in which it is done. It is easiest to do this, I find, if we notice that there are three main

kinds of statement used in Nazi propaganda. These three kinds are, first, 'unskilled lying'; second, 'semi-skilled lying'; and third, 'highly-skilled lying.'

The first (unskilled lying) just consists in making plain, simple, statements which are not true at all. The second (semi-skilled lying) consists in making complicated statements, parts of which are true, and parts of which are false. The third (highly-skilled lying) consists in making statements which are in themselves true, but are used to convey a wrong impression.

What I've called 'unskilled lying' does not need much comment. It is just the plain, simple lie, such as the assertion that the *Ark Royal* had been sunk. This type occurs most commonly in the Nazi news bulletins. The other two types are usually found in the Nazi talks. They are the complicated types which produce the feeling that "there's something in what he says."

As an example of 'semi-skilled lying,' which is partly true and partly false, here is a passage from a Hamburg talk on concentration camps. It has been given repeatedly at intervals from January 8th onwards. The speaker said,

"*Will Britain ever tell the truth and publish a report on conditions as they are? Will it be admitted that concentration camps are British institutions, used against women and children during the Boer War? Twenty-six thousand women and children died of fever and starvation in those concentration camps.*"

This is a good example of 'semi-skilled lying,' for parts are true, and parts are false. There *were* camps set up by us towards the end of the Boer War, they *were* called "concentration camps," and many of their occupants *did* die. That is the true part. But

the Nazi concentration camps are places of punishment and ought to be called prison camps. Our Boer War camps were altogether different. They were not places of punishment, and they might more properly have been called 'refugee camps.' They were set up to house the women and children who were homeless as a result of the war, for many areas had been cleared by the British Army to suppress outbreaks of guerrilla warfare.

It was frankly admitted in a Government Blue Book that the camps were very badly managed at first. A large number of their occupants died, mainly through quite unforeseen epidemics of diseases which were new to South Africa. The authorities were undoubtedly to be blamed for bad management, but for nothing worse, certainly not for the things for which the authorities of the Nazi camps are to be blamed. Many of *their* occupants have died through deliberate ill-treatment and cruelty, and in many cases, premeditated murder. The difference between the two kinds of concentration camps is well shown by the fact that many of the Boer women remained in our camps of their own free will for some months after the war was over.

The Nazi camps and our Boer War camps are both called by the same name, but the Nazis' assertion that what they are doing now is the same as what we did in the Boer War, is like saying that a slab of ice-cream is the same as a builder's brick, because they are both called "bricks." This form of lying would not deceive anybody who knows the facts. But people with other jobs to do can't check everything they hear, and they are the people the Nazis are hoping to disturb.

The same applies to the third sort of trick, which I called 'highly-skilled lying.' It goes like this. The broadcaster discusses some difficult or learned subject.

Then he makes some assertion which is by itself quite true. This statement cannot be contradicted. But it is used in such a way as to mislead anybody who does not happen to have a specialist knowledge of the subject in question.

Here is an example. This one has appeared in Hamburg talks over and over again since December 10th last year. The speaker said,

"*In the last century it was regarded as right and proper that women should work in the mines, often for twelve hours a day, and sometimes fourteen. Investigators into labour conditions found hundreds of women crawling along, unclad and harnessed, dragging coal trucks along in the bowels of the earth. Is this a tradition of liberty? . . . If you doubt it, read your own historians, Townsend and Warner, Tawney and Trevelyan—they will tell you all about it.*"

The speaker is at his old game of trying to disturb our confidence. He wants to make us think that we must be a pretty poor lot, and our country a pretty contemptible one, if things like these could ever happen in it.

This example shows very clearly how the trick is done. The assertion made about conditions in the mines in our country a century ago is true, or very nearly true. What is not true, is the impression the Nazis are using it to create. They are trying to make us think that conditions in Britain were worse than in other countries. Now, no doubt the talk might have that effect on people who, for one reason or another, have no special knowledge of history. But if we do know enough history and compare the present with the past, then we see that the situation is altogether different, and much more encouraging.

Those conditions were not isolated atrocities taking place in a world which was in other respects like

modern civilisation. Those conditions, and worse, were found everywhere at that time. By modern standards, conditions of life were horribly bad. Unless we have made a special study, we just don't know how very harsh the material conditions of life used to be, compared with even the least satisfactory to-day.

This is a very natural misunderstanding. When, for instance, we look at portraits of seventeenth and eighteenth-century gentlemen in those dignified and impressive wigs, it is easy for us to fall into the illusion that their lives must have been extremely comfortable. It is easy to overlook the grim fact that they wore wigs because their heads were shaved, and their heads were shaved because living conditions, even among the wealthiest, were so dirty that shaving was then almost the only practicable way for them to keep free of lice. Those conditions, which are found to-day only among the very few who are either wilfully dirty, or neglected, were the conditions under which everybody lived, only a comparatively short time ago.

The point is not whether the barbarities such as the Nazis quote ever occurred in our country. They did. They occurred in all countries. The point is that in our country we have outgrown most of them, and are trying to outgrow the rest. We are moving forward to greater humanity, both in our ideals and in our actions. The Nazis, on the other hand, are moving backward, deliberately, to the brutalities of the Middle Ages, and they are glorying in it.

These examples I have quoted are interesting, of course, for their own sakes. But they are important mainly because they show how the Nazis work their technique of making us think that "there's something in what they are saying."

The purpose for which these tricks are used varies from time to time, according to Herr Hitler's policy at the moment. In the past, they have been employed

mainly in attempts to cause dissension among us. I suspect that, from now on, since the war has taken a more active form, they will be employed mainly in attempts to alarm us by false news and threats. But, whatever the purpose, and whatever the subject-matter, the tricks will be just the same.

VII

WHAT THE GERMANS HEAR

Broadcast on April 30th, 1940

The Germans hear some very strange things. On the 11th of April, the German Wireless, broadcasting a news bulletin to German listeners, said, "*Panic is reigning among the population of Northern Scotland.*" And the following day they said, "*There is a veritable stampede in Edinburgh. The inhabitants are fleeing from the city, head over heels.*"

Now at first it is difficult for us to see why the Nazis should make so absurd an assertion. But they went on to say that this panic and stampede were the result of what they called "*The complete German success in Norway.*"

That explains it.[1] The Nazis had hoped for a complete success in Norway. They had not got it, but they were trying to produce, by propaganda, the same effect on the German people which a real success would have had. Therefore they asserted again and again that there had been a success; and they now invented a confirmation by saying that there was panic in that part of the British Isles which lies nearest Norway—quite an artistic touch, and just the thing a novelist would think of, if he were writing a story.

This is a typical instance. It shows clearly the two points about Nazi propaganda which strike everybody who examines it. One of them is this. The Nazis first of all think out the effect they want to produce; then they think of things to say in order to produce it. And the other point is this. There is an entire absence of restraint. The Nazi propagandists are not hampered

[1] Denmark and Norway had been invaded seven days before.

by any regard for the facts. Their job is to produce the effect; and they alter anything, or invent anything, in order to produce it.

These are the simple principles on which all Nazi propaganda everywhere is based. But there is a marked difference between Nazi propaganda for Germany, and Nazi propaganda for other countries. This is due to practical considerations. It would obviously be ineffective to say things to an audience, which that audience knew to be untrue; and countries other than Germany do often know what is untrue, from their own sources of information. In dealing with them, the Nazis are in consequence somewhat limited.

But in preparing propaganda for the German people, the Nazi propagandists are almost entirely free from any such limitations, as the Germans are for practical purposes completely cut off from all outside and independent information.

The result of this in practice, is that Nazi propaganda inside Germany is often incredibly fantastic. At least, it seems incredibly fantastic to us, who can look on from the outside.

It isn't by accident that it is fantastic. Herr Hitler shows why, in *Mein Kampf*. He says,

"*A definite factor in getting a lie believed is the size of the lie. The great mass of the people, in the simplicity of their hearts, are more easily taken in by a big lie than by a little one.*"

Here are some examples of Nazi propaganda inside Germany showing these two points. The Nazis are continually trying to make the Germans hate us, and think of us as a scheming and evilly-disposed people. Here is one specimen of the way they do it. This is what the German Wireless said on February 24th:

"*Before the World War, an English officer had the idea of building up a large organisation of children, and started by forming a boys' organisation in England. He directed them to write down all the things of military interest they found in the country. The boys were naturally thrilled. It was therefore easy to found branches of this organisation in all European countries. Everywhere boys unsuspectingly drew maps of military interest, and these, naturally, were all sent to the English Head Office.*

"*Thus* (the broadcast continued) *the British had an army of unsuspecting young spies all over Europe, and the whole thing was so well camouflaged that no one suspected. The name of the spy who had this devilish inspiration is Sir Robert Baden-Powell, and his organisation is called the Boy Scouts.*"

I don't think that specimen needs much comment.

The same principles are applied in the making up and issuing of the German News. This is conspicuously shown in the news the German people are being given this month.[1] The Nazis have to keep the German people convinced that they are being successful. This is essential, for the Nazis would soon lose popular support if they ceased to be successful; and they are well aware of that.

So, to produce the required effect on the German public, they send out news bulletins such as this one, which came out on the 17th. It said:

"*In the six days between April 9th and April 15th, Britain lost four battleships, two battle-cruisers, two heavy cruisers, three cruisers, one aircraft-carrier, nine destroyers, and seven submarines.*"

In fact our losses in that period, as you know, only amounted to four destroyers and—at the most—three submarines.

[1] The principal war news at this date was the fighting in Norway.

That report was sent out in accordance with the same plan which led them to assert, in another news bulletin, that there was panic in the North of Scotland, and that the inhabitants of Edinburgh had fled head over heels.

And here now is an example of the same two principles applied in what is probably the most remarkable subject of Nazi propaganda. One of the main preoccupations of the Nazi leaders is, of course, keeping themselves in power. Partly, I think, because they have no tradition behind them, but for other reasons also, they have adopted a device which was practised with considerable effect by the autocratic rulers of the Roman Empire, some two thousand years ago. They have been working up the belief that the Nazi Fuehrer is something more than man; that he is, in fact, divine.

This process has been going on for some time. As early as three years ago, on June 3rd, 1937, an article in the *National Zeitung* had said bluntly, "*God has revealed himself, not in Jesus Christ, but in Adolf Hitler.*"

By now, the Nazis are no longer content to call their Fuehrer a revelation of God. He is now himself a God. Here is a quotation from a book on Herr Hitler by Grigol Robakidse, published in 1939:

"*A boy, teased and plagued by some girls, made as if to strike one of them. Suddenly he saw it was the girl whose fair hair the Fuehrer had once stroked. In a flash he was conscious of the radiance around the girl's head, enveloped in a halo by that caress. And his hand was stayed.*"

There was a very good broadcast specimen of this sort of propaganda on a Sunday morning in February, February the 4th. At the hour which used to be church time, all the German stations broadcast an

extraordinary programme, a sort of musical melodrama, called "The Fuehrer's Way to Power."

It was an astonishing mixture. It included nationalistic poetry, readings from *Mein Kampf*, speeches on gramophone records, and so on. There was intermittent music of every sort, from grand opera to popular marching songs; and the accompanying noises varied from frantically howling crowds to artillery and machine-gun fire.

It began very much on a quiet pathetic note. There was a long account of the disintegration of Germany, with references to the Germans as dreamers, and extracts from the old German fairy tales. Then came music from Wagner's operas, and more poetry. This was all carefully worked up to prepare the setting for Herr Hitler's birth, which took place, like the supernatural birth of a mythical hero, amid shouts of "Heil," and fanfares on the trumpets.

Then there was a sort of Litany to Herr Hitler, which went like this:

> "*There are so many who have never stood in thy presence,*
> *But for them thou art the Saviour still . . .*
> *They seek the clear light of thy spirit . . .*
> *Thou art so gentle and thou art so great,*
> *Thou art so strong and so austere . . .*
> *We lay our hearts open before thee.*
> *No man left thy presence unrewarded, if the light from thine eyes did but shine upon him.*"

Now, if ever any production of the human mind deserved the description of "bunk," it is that one. And it is blasphemous bunk, too. But it went on in the same strain for most of that Sunday morning; and the second part of it was broadcast on the following Sunday morning.

Those examples which I've been quoting, are representative specimens of the sort of news items and

propaganda programmes the German people hear. I want to emphasise that. These are not particularly extreme, or unusually absurd examples. I picked them out because they are representative, and consequently illuminating. They show the propagandists' job being done.

Now, when we talk among ourselves like this, about Nazi propaganda inside Germany, much of it seems so fantastic that we can hardly believe that anybody could take it seriously. But, unfortunately for the civilisation of Europe, across the North Sea there live some seventy millions of Germans, the vast majority of whom do take it seriously, and are under its influence, all day and every day.

There is an explanation for this, and the reasons, I think, are three. The first is that the ordinary German tends to believe what he hears, because he never hears anything different. The wireless says something ; the newspapers say the same ; exhibitions are arranged emphasising the same ; private persons say the same, for if they say anything different they get into trouble. There is just nothing else for the ordinary German to believe.

The second reason is that, in the main, the things the Germans are told are things they want to hear, things they would like to think were true. They want to be told they are a superior race ; they want to be told they are being successful ; and they want to believe that their fate is in the hands of a superhuman Leader. It isn't difficult to convince people who want to be convinced.

And there is a third reason which, I think, is important too. It is this. In Germany, it pays to believe ; or rather, it doesn't pay not to believe. If you don't believe, you cut yourself off. The ruling class will have nothing to do with you, and you cannot get a better job, or even keep the one you've got. And you

cannot even find companionship in other than hole-and-corner ways. There is no Opposition you can join, where you can find like-minded people, as in this country. There is just no place for you at all. It is only an exceptionally strong character that can keep up a lonely struggle like that, and hold out for any length of time against the pressure to think as the crowd thinks.

The comprehensiveness and completeness of the Nazi propaganda system inside Germany is something new in human experience. There has never been anything quite like it in the world before. It is not surprising that Dr. Goebbels can say, as he did on June 25th last year, "*We have created the Reich by propaganda.*"

Whether they can make their Reich endure by propaganda is a different matter.

VIII

CHANGING THE TUNE

Broadcast on May 14th, 1940[1]

Nazi propaganda has changed. It has had to change.

Away back in the early months of the war, the position was different. People in this country had not thought much about propaganda. The Nazi leaders could therefore plan their propaganda on the assumption that people might be made to *believe* it, because they did not know what its real purpose was. But by this time—thanks to the actions of the Nazis themselves—we have learned about them, and their propaganda.

Take this case. When they were preparing to invade Holland and Belgium, they used propaganda to conceal their intention up to the last moment. At two-fifteen last Friday morning,[1] less than an hour before German troops crossed the Dutch frontier, they broadcast from Zeesen, in English, a denial that Germany had presented an ultimatum to Holland, or had made any similar demand. And they blandly added that any such rumours were part of an Allied campaign of lies to cause uneasiness among Germany's neighbours.

Such things would have surprised us at one time. They surprise nobody now. This change in our attitude to enemy propaganda has created a new situation for the Nazis. They have recognised it, and have changed their methods accordingly.

The position now is this. They know that we do not believe them ; so they are now employing methods which are calculated to have an effect upon us even though we don't believe. That may sound like ' black magic," but there is nothing magical about it. It can

[1] Holland and Belgium had been invaded four days earlier.

be done only too easily, if we are not on our guard.

Here is the sort of thing I mean. Suppose you have learned by experience that some particular man is an habitual liar, and takes a delight in telling tall stories and raising false alarms. Suppose you know this perfectly well, and don't believe a word he says. Well, if that man suddenly stuck his head inside your door, and said: "I say, look here, your house is on fire. There are flames coming out of the roof," then, even though you don't believe him; even though he has done the same sort of thing before; even though you feel sure it isn't true; still, you do get a fright. And you put down whatever you are doing, and go and make sure that the house is not on fire. And you won't feel easy in mind until you have made sure.

The incident may have little or no lasting effect, but it has alarmed you, and it has prevented you from getting on with your work.

Reacting in this way may not be strictly logical behaviour, but it is what everybody would do. It is a quality of human nature. The Nazis know this well, and they are playing upon it.

At critical times, such as the present moment, they will rush out a flood of alarming rumours and false reports, even though they know that, within a few days, these will be decisively disproved. But they have no reputation for truthfulness to lose. The discovery that what they said was just another lie, cannot damage them; and the alarm and disturbance might damage us. So, from their point of view, the game is worth trying.

This is what they are doing now. They are saying anything they can think of, which might frighten people. Since last Friday, their news bulletins have been almost entirely of this kind.

In this new situation there is another technique, a

very old one, which they can continue to use. It consists in contriving to get some notion into general circulation, and keeping it there, until it comes in the end to be accepted without thinking, by people who would not accept it, if they did think about it, and if they remembered about the source from which it came.

Here is an instance. It is an old one, but I want to quote it, because I got caught by it myself at one time, and possibly you did too.

Like so many other people, I had long thought of the Treaty of Versailles as being excessively harsh, and had even thought that its harshness had perhaps something to do with the rise of Hitlerism in Germany.

Then I began to be doubtful. I saw that this opinion of the Treaty was just a copy of the opinions which had been going about for the last ten years or so. And I reflected that those opinions could all be traced back to Nazi speeches and propaganda over many years; and that I would not have accepted this opinion, if I had had to consider it as a statement direct from a Nazi source. And I further reflected that I had no first-hand knowledge of the Treaty, and was not properly entitled to an opinion at all.

So I got a copy of the Treaty and read it. That was a sobering experience. I began to see how I had been taken in. The Treaty of Versailles may or may not have been unwise and misguided in many of its parts. I think it was, but that is not the point here. The point is that, all things considered, it was on the whole remarkably lenient to Germany. For comparison, I looked up the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, which was the treaty forced by Germany upon Russia, when she lay at Germany's mercy, early in 1918. It is crushing by any standard, and outrageously so, compared with the Treaty of Versailles.

Then I saw what had been the purpose, and the technique, of that particular piece of propaganda.

Herr Hitler used the Treaty deliberately for years, as a propaganda device, for a purpose.

First: if the Treaty had been as harsh as he said it was, it would have been a grievance; and he used it inside Germany, to unite all Germans under him, by giving them this alleged concrete grievance to hold them together.

Then later, when he had got into power, he continued to use it for a different purpose, namely to conceal his real foreign policy. He used it to make the rest of Europe believe that he would be satisfied, when he had got rid of the last remains of the Treaty.

The technique by which he succeeded in spreading that notion about the Treaty of Versailles was very simple. He just asserted, again and again and again, that it was harsh, shamefully and intolerably harsh.

This was repeated so often, in every report of every Nazi speech, that gradually we began to forget that it was only Herr Hitler and his Nazis who were saying this. And so, gradually and without realising it, many people came to think of the Treaty as intolerably harsh, and even as the cause of all the trouble.

This technique of spreading propaganda, by sheer bulk and sustained repetition, is applied by the Nazis to many different subjects. By this technique, they tried at the beginning of the war to spread the notion that the British Empire was decrepit and ramshackle, and would come adrift under the strain of war. But in this case there was no difficulty in seeing the facts. The Empire very clearly did not come adrift. So they soon gave up that attempt.

At the present moment, they are vigorously using the same technique again. The notion they are trying to spread this time is that their new weapons cannot be resisted.

There is, of course, another way—a quite different way—in which the Nazis try to affect us by their

propaganda, even though we don't believe them. This way is for them to put their propaganda across by such a roundabout route that we don't realise that it comes from them.

There are many ways of doing it. The most important one at the moment is this. The Nazis have their agents in neutral countries. The propaganda headquarters in Berlin prepare false reports, and those agents are employed to spread the reports, and get them into the neutral papers. Some of them are then quoted in our papers, and by the B.B.C. That is the origin of many of those alarming and contradictory reports which were coming out of Sweden recently, and are coming out of other neutral countries now.

The B.B.C. and most of the newspapers are always careful to quote such reports as being only reports. But it is often difficult for us to remember afterwards (especially if we have not been paying very close attention) whether a particular item was official news, or if it was only a quotation from a report in some foreign newspaper.

It seems to me that some means will have to be arranged to make a clearer distinction between news we can rely on, and questionable reports from doubtful sources. At present, it is too easy for us to confuse one with the other.

As a matter of fact, the possibility of this confusion is being worked on by the Nazis in an attempt to discredit our news services. It is being done very systematically, in this way. Their agents spread false reports of Allied successes. These appear in neutral papers, or on the neutral wireless, and are quoted by ours. Then the Nazis contradict them, as if they were our official reports.

The false report that our troops had recaptured Narvik, almost as soon as they had landed, is an instance. It is now known that this report was "planted" by Nazi agents in Sweden. It appeared

in the Swedish news, and was consequently quoted in ours. It was quoted *as a report.* It was *not* given as official news. But the Nazis made use of that possible confusion in our minds, and said: "Look how unreliable the British News is. They told you Narvik had been recaptured, and it hasn't been recaptured yet."

This attempt to discredit our news services is being carried on very vigorously at the moment. You see, the Nazis don't stand to lose anything. They have not got a reputation for truthfulness to lose, and we have. If they could bring the trust in our news down to anything like the lack of trust in theirs, it would be a great advantage to them.

This new plan—that is, trying to terrify us, instead of trying to persuade us—is likely to continue for some time. As far as I can see at present, there isn't likely to be any further great change in Nazi propaganda to this country either in its purpose or in its tone, until the end of the war is in sight.

Things may be worse before they are better, but in the end, Germany will be overpowered, and the Nazis will be crushed. How and when the end will come, nobody knows.

If things go against us at first, and the process of overcoming the Nazis is long and slow, then the Nazi leaders—or some of them—will almost certainly make peace moves when the end is in sight, in the hope of saving their own positions. If that happens, there will be a change in Nazi propaganda. It will become all peacefulness and good intentions, with soulful assertions that the war has been a common misfortune for us all, and so forth. We have heard it all before.

The tone of the voice of the Nazi is changed whenever it suits, but the mind behind the voice is still the same.

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT
. *EVERYONE* .
SHOULD READ THIS BOOK

The Nazis use propaganda as a weapon. But if you understand it, and see *why* it is done, and *how* it is done, then it cannot harm you.

Mr. Sinclair's broadcast talks have helped many millions of men and women to understand Nazi propaganda, and thus protect themselves against depressing effects which designed to produce, and produce on people who dc understand it.

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